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Early Phases of Segregation in Cairo, Illinois

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How was Cairo, Illinois affected by the civil unrest in the United States during the 1960s? Cairo, Illinois is located at the southern tip of Illinois. The Ohio River and Mississippi River join in this small agricultural and industrial community. Riverboat traffic added to its steady growth.

In 1820, twenty black slaves were brought to this site, beginning a long history of injustice for black residents. The population of blacks increased due to a steady migration from southern states.

Issues of racial segregation began early, despite Illinois laws forbidding it. Blacks were banned from theaters, restaurants, and other public places. The Illinois Civil Rights Act of 1885 forbade discrimination against blacks in public places. The Free Schools Act of 1909 forbade segregation on account of color, race, or nationality. In 1918, a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in Cairo.

In the 1960s many cities across the country were involved with a racial tug of war. The riots, marches, and growing violence in Chicago, fueled the social unrest in Cairo as well as the rest of the state.

The U. S. Census in 1960 reported thirty-nine percent of Cairo's population was black. Despite this percentage of blacks and all the civil rights laws in place in Illinois, inequality and segregation of blacks continued.

Many blacks boycotted stores that would not hire them. A public swimming pool denied black swimmers. In 1967, the hanging of a local soldier, Robert Hunt, in a Cairo police station, escalated the violence in this once quiet town. This violence prompted the Illinois National Guard to be called in to restore order.

A letter written by Preston Ewing, Jr., Cairo's NAACP president, to Adlai Stevenson, the state treasurer, reported that Cairo banks would not hire blacks. Stevenson told the banks they must hire blacks or the state would remove its money from them.

In 1968, the Burkhart Factory, Cairo's largest industry, practiced racial discrimination. Also, little league baseball was canceled to keep black children from playing. To further segregate white and black students, a private all-white school was started.

Throughout 1969, black citizens could not gather at sports activities, in local parks, or form marches without being threatened by local police or the White Hat vigilante group. This group was organized by Alexander Peyton Berbling.

To counteract the White Hats, the United Front of Cairo, a coalition of black organizations was formed. It started to boycott white businesses.

In April 1969, Lieutenant Governor Paul Simon and a special committee appointed by the Illinois House of Representatives began to investigate the events occurring in Cairo. The Illinois General Assembly ordered the White Hats to disband and for the enforcement of civil rights laws and racial integration of city and county departments.

Even though the state government became involved, white residents continued to hold mass meetings in public parks and blacks held civil rights rallies in churches. Three local newspapers, the *Cairo Evening Citizen*, the *Southern Illinoisan*, and the *East St. Louis Monitor* helped influence how people looked at the events that occurred. The information portrayed either a pro-white or pro-black newspaper prospective.

A group of United Front members went to the state capital on July 7, 1969, to ask the governor for help with the segregation and inequality that persisted in Cairo. However, they were refused admittance to Governor Ogilvie's office and were arrested by state police.

In September 1969, the mayor of Cairo issued a statement prohibiting the gathering of two or more people, all marches, and picketing. In turn, a federal court ruled this proclamation unconstitutional. Throughout October 1969, violence against black protesters continued. It appeared that federal and state involvement was ineffective in controlling the continued segregation and inequality of Cairo's, as well as other Illinois community's black citizens. [From E. Bernhard, I. Latimer, and H. O'Conner, *Pursuit of Freedom*; M. A. Haven, C. B. Hobson, and K. B. Ward, *The Effects of White Newspaper Coverage on Civil Rights Activities in a Smaller Community*; J. R. Ralph, Jr., *Northern Protest*; and J. P. Roddy, *Let My People Go.*]

Women's Role in History: Civil Rights

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Throughout history, women have been discriminated against and their rights ignored and Illinois has been no exception. But, many women have also been trying to earn their rights since as early as the nineteenth century. But what did they do that made them special, and what did they even accomplish? A few select women have made major impacts upon our country and state regarding women's rights.

One of the many women who have fought for their rights was Jane Addams. She was a woman whose courage and determination has been prominent in Illinois history since 1889, when she founded the Hull House, a campus in Chicago that she started with Ellen Gates Starr. This settlement house was a home for women and children. It was built in a neighborhood not among large buildings but around other houses.

Jane Addams did many other things. She was firmly against child labor. "A bill was introduced into legislature in March of 1903, embodying the conclusions of the Federated Women's Clubs of Illinois, the Women's Catholic League, the Chicago Federation of Labor, the Illinois Federation of Labor, and Jane Addams," according to biographer James Webber Linn. This bill forbade any child in Illinois, and the country, under the age of fourteen to work for anyone other than their parents, and any child between the ages of fourteen and sixteen to work over eight-hour days.

In 1881, Jane Addams came across a magazine at her college. It was *Our Herald* and was a women's magazine about the suffrage and hardships of women trying to earn their rights. She was amazed that such a magazine was not more widely read and decided

to help it. Then, in 1891, Addams saw the first suffrage newspaper in the state of Illinois, the *Illinois Suffragist*. "In that year Mrs. McCulloch became Superintendent of Legislative Work for Women's Suffrage, and led and won the battle to establish the right of women to vote for school trustees, except in such communities dependent on the state constitution, which lawyers believed specifically denied to women the right to vote for constitutional offices," in the words of James Webber Linn.

Many other newspapers followed the *Illinois Suffragist* in their quest to give women more rights. Most did not hire women to be news reporters because they thought that they could not write, report, or get hard hitting stories as well as men. One woman, "The Duchess," made sure that women were able to work for newspapers and tell the world their point of views.

Virginia Marmaduke paved the way for women to come into journalism. Chicago was taken by storm as Marmaduke stopped the *Chicago Sun Times* from allowing women to write only in the society pages, fashion, and entertainment sections.

Marmaduke's first job was writing for the *Herrin Daily Journal* and she showed everyone that she could write and cover stories "just as well as her male counterparts," according to biographer Jackson Foote.

After that, she applied for a job at the *Chicago Sun Times* and the editor gave her a sheet to fill out. She did, but left one spot blank, namely, the line where she chose what she wanted to do. The editor had given her choices and when he asked, "Why didn't you fill it in?" She simply responded with the statement that she did not want any of the choices he had offered. He had only offered her categories like society, fashion, and entertainment. She wanted front page, hard-hitting assignments. The editor was taken

aback at first, but loved her edge and hired her on the spot. She worked for many newspapers and they all said that she was the kind of woman who made a difference. Indeed she did, and so have other countless women, the list too long to fit into this article.

In conclusion, society has changed the way we think of women. At first, women were judged as lesser human beings who did not know how to think or act for themselves. That idea had been corrected and now women have just as many rights as most men. Many have changed the way people think. For example, Jane Addams, influenced how the United States treated child labor and women's suffrage. Virginia "Duchess" Marmaduke set an example that promoted an end to discrimination against women in the professional workplace. [From T. Carabillo, J. B. Csida, and J. B. Meuli, *Feminist Chronicles 1953-1993*; Dana Fitzgerald, "Jane Addams," *Illinois History* (Ap. 1998); Jackson Foote, "The Duchess—A Journalism Pioneer," *Illinois History* (Ap. 1997); Elizabeth Frost and Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, *Women's Suffrage in America*; Jessica Knebel, "Mary Harris Jones, Labor's Advocate," *Illinois History* (Dec. 1997); James Webber Linn, *Jane Addams*; Margaret Mary Moran, "Lottie Holman O'Neill," *Illinois History (Ap. 1994);* Dina Lynn Romano, "One Woman, One Vote," *Illinois History* (Ap. 1998); Lynn Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*; and M. W. Sorensen, "Ahead of Their Time," *Illinois Heritage* (Nov. 2001).]

The Chicago Freedom Movement and Education

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In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court passed the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision outlawing school segregation. Though black Chicago already had a long history of fighting for good education, the racial basis for unequal education still existed within the Chicago public schools. The plight of housing segregation and discrimination for African Americans had a direct impact on the quality of school facilities and education for African Americans students. The practice of redlining was used to segregate African American communities and as a result directly segregated schools. Redlining was also a racial practice used to limit the African American people's use of resources. Redlining is the practice of "arbitrarily denying or limiting financial services to specific neighborhoods;" generally its residents were people of color or poor. These practices were among the many the city government used to limit the availability of the resources the African American people had in the community. Because of this, many African Americans had to travel long distances to find a work place and decent schools for their children.

Due to housing segregation in Chicago, many of the schools that blacks were able to go to became overcrowded. In a Chicago ghetto school of the 1960s, 40 to 50 students were often stuffed into a single room. In a crowded classroom like this, the children received no special attention in school, and they become resentful. Teachers tended to be reduced to custodians whose greatest accomplishment was physical order and quiet. Some teachers in such conditions operated desperately and left at the first opportunity.

They were not escaping from this or that race, however. They were rebelling at wretched learning and teaching conditions. Children of the ghetto desperately needed individual attention from their teachers. They needed continued attention, but they did not receive it.

In order to reduce class size from 50 students per class to about 15 per class and solve some of the problems of school overcrowding Al Raby, a former Chicago public school teacher and local civil rights activist, brought Martin Luther King, Jr. to Chicago to protest and strike against the Chicago school board and a system symbolized by the Willis Wagons. Willis Wagons was "the pejorative term for portable school classrooms used by critics of Superintendent of Schools Benjamin C. Willis (1953–1966), when protesting school overcrowding and segregation in black neighborhoods from 1962 to 1966," according to the *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

The African American community tried to do a lot against school inequality through marches, protests, and strikes. The simplest way was speaking out on the issues. The most active organization was the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO) headed by Al Raby. In one case, the CCCO demanded that the Chicago Public School Board hold up action on the 1967 school budget until it had heard recommendations of a civil rights task force cooperating with schools. They wanted equality in schools. They wanted equal budgeting in both black and white schools. They also wanted integrated schools so blacks could go where they pleased, be happy, and end overcrowding. The fight was a long and hard fight but things were accomplished.

There are still sections in Chicago that have all white schools and all black schools along with other minorities. Most suburban schools still have better supplies and better learning environments than neighborhood schools. There are still school strikes,

and people still speak out about segregation. [From Chicago Urban League, National Urban League Leadership Development Project, Project Director: Miss Willene DeMond, Anatomy of a Boycott, Edward Jenner School, 1964; Thomas Lee Philpott, *Black Metropolis*; *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, "Redlining," and "Willis Wagons"; and Bill Van Alstine, CCCO To Demand Delay In School Budget Passage, *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition), Dec. 6, 1966.]

Edward Coles, Illinois' Abolitionist Governor

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The course of Illinois history took an unexpected turn when an abolitionist became the second governor of Illinois. During the thirteen years he spent in the state, Edward Coles proved himself to be an individual whose ideas were far ahead of his time. Born in Albemarle County, Virginia, he was a former slave owner, an idealistic aristocrat and the confidant of presidents. An influential and effective governor, Edward Coles had a tremendous impact on the state of Illinois and shaped the state's notions concerning slavery, making it a free state before the Civil War.

On December 15, 1786, Edward Coles was born to John Coles II and Rebecca Elizabeth Tucker Coles. He was the youngest of ten children. Coles' father was a Revolutionary War colonel. Coming from a prominent Virginian family, Coles grew up on a plantation with many slaves. Consequently, he was accustomed to a pro-slavery atmosphere. Socially, he knew the leading Virginia statesmen. His friends and relatives were slave owners. Like most sons of southern planters, Coles received his early education from private tutors and at a modest local academy. In 1805, he continued his education at Hampden-Sydney College, and then later transferred to the College of William and Mary.

From his early college days, Coles' attention had been drawn to the question of slavery. He fell under the influence of Bishop James Madison, the college president, who encouraged his students to read and learn the texts and ideas of the Enlightenment. Madison considered slavery a violation of natural law as expressed in the Declaration of

Independence. Coles engrossed himself in Madison's lectures on moral philosophy and Enlightenment ideas. It became impossible for Coles to accept the practice of slave-holding with the immortal declaration "that all men are born free and equal." He concluded that man was not property and therefore should not be treated as such. "I could not consent to hold as property what I had no right to, & which was not, and could not be property, according to my understanding of the rights & duties of men- and therefore determined that I would not and could not hold my fellowman as a slave," Coles recalled.

At the age of twenty-three, upon his father's death in 1808, Coles inherited a nine hundred-acre plantation and twenty-three slaves. He decided to free his slaves at the first opportunity, and even relocate to Northwest Territory where slavery had been banned by the Ordinance of 1787. However, he was dissuaded from taking any course of action by his brother, Isaac, who asked Coles to replace him as secretary to President James Madison. Initially, Edward Coles was reluctant. However, he was ultimately persuaded by his benefactor, James Monroe. As private secretary to President Madison, Coles spent six years in the White House. During these years, he passionately sought out information about the Old Northwest and tried to convince Jefferson to develop and take leadership in some plan for gradual emancipation.

Coles quit his post in 1815 and took a trip, traveling by a horse and buggy, as well as saddle horse to Shawneetown and Kaskaskia into the Illinois Territory. A servant also accompanied him on this journey. Coles was impressed with Illinois, but President Madison called him back for a diplomatic mission to Russia. Upon returning from Russia, Coles made a second trip to Kaskaskia and attended the constitutional convention

in Illinois. This was being held to write a state constitution since this was one of the requirements that a territory had to do before it could become a state.

During the convention the question of slavery or no slavery within the borders of Illinois was a serious issue. Settlers from the South who had come to Illinois had continued to hold their slaves. Additionally, one or two thousand slaves were used in the government owned salt mines of southern Illinois. The pro-slavery delegates to the constitutional convention argued that if slavery were excluded the salt mines would be forced to close. However, a compromise was reached. The new Illinois constitution forbade bringing slaves into the new state, but did not free the slaves who were already there. Coles did not leave the convention until he was certain that Illinois would become a free state.

In the spring of 1819, Coles returned to Virginia and sold his plantation and began his journey westward along with his slaves. On an Ohio River flatboat, Coles told his slaves that from that moment on they were free men and women, and that they had the choice of whether or not to stay with him or follow their own paths. He told the freed slaves that if they did decide to stay with him, he would ensure that each family settled on a farm and pay them wages.

After arriving in Edwardsville, Illinois, Coles assumed the duty of registrar at the Edwardsville land office. He had been appointed to this position by President Monroe prior to his arrival. Coles became well known in Illinois due to his youthful, courteous and dignified appeal.

Three years later, he decided to run for governor as an antislavery candidate. In the election of 1822, he ran against one antislavery candidate and two pro-slavery

candidates. Coles received only a third of the vote. However, it was the highest. Therefore he won. Thus, Coles became a minority governor. The lieutenant governorship and control of the legislature were won by the pro-slavery candidates. In his inaugural address, Coles asked for the emancipation of the slaves that had been kept as the result of the 1818 compromise. He felt that was the humane thing to do. This, to the pro-slavery men of Illinois, was a direct assault upon their prized tradition. Therefore, the legislators, who were members of the proslavery group, prepared for an active fight to legalize slavery through a constitutional amendment.

The proslavery amendment movement had strong support. Anti-Coles men dominated a special committee which insisted that Virginia's guarantee to the French took precedence over the 1787 Ordinance. Additionally, the proslavery legislators asserted that Illinois had the same right as any other state to amend its constitution, and therefore became a slave state even though the Northwest Ordinance forbid it. A referendum to have a constitutional convention, which would write an amendment, was recommended. A two-thirds majority in each legislative house and a majority vote of the people at the 1824 general election was required for the proposition to pass.

At this point, Coles promptly organized an antislavery society with the aid of Morris Birkbeck and issued an address to the people that exposed the intentions and schemes of the convention backers. Coles concluded the address by stating that if the proslavery group triumphed "we should write the epitaph of free government." The document stressed the immoral aspects of slavery and it was written by Governor Coles and signed by fifteen legislators.

The campaign for the constitutional amendment continued for nearly a year and a half, drawing intense public involvement. This was a direct result of Coles' recruitment of prominent writers that wrote pamphlets that were published anonymously. Furthermore, Coles with the aid of antislavery supporters bought the Edwardsville *Intelligencer* and switched its editorial policy to argue that slavery was "both wrong in principle and unprofitable." The purchase of this newspaper was important because three out of five of Illinois' newspapers supported slavery. Coles even went as far as donating his four-year salary to the cause of anti-slavery and spent heavily from his own funds to support it.

After an eighteen-month campaign, the voters of Illinois went to the polls to vote on the constitutional convention. Unquestionably, Coles and the antislavery convention cause triumphed, 6,640 to 4,972. In spite of this victory, two decades would pass before the courts would finally rule that slavery in Illinois was illegal.

With this accomplishment in hand, Coles repeated his request for more humane laws for blacks to the incoming legislature; nevertheless, harassment continued. Another issue arose for Coles as the Madison County officials brought suit against him. In freeing his slaves, Coles was unaware of the law that required him to post bond swearing they never would become public charges. The suit ended after the Supreme Court released Coles from the two-thousand-dollar penalty, and he was cleared. Coles' last political victory was the 1824 referendum. After completing his term, he made a poor showing as an anti-Jackson candidate for Congress.

On November 28, 1833, Governor Coles married Sally Logan Roberts. He continued living in Edwardsville, taking care of his farm after the expiration of his term

of service. Being fond of agriculture, Coles founded the first agricultural society in the state. Due to poor health, he left Illinois in 1832 for Philadelphia. He passed away at his residence on July 7, 1868.

Undoubtedly, Edward Coles was an influential figure during the early 1800s. He not only was a strong believer in the equality of all people, but also a powerful, efficient governor. He led Illinois through a difficult era and was largely responsible for removing slavery from the state. Coles influenced Illinois history in a way no other governor before him or after him ever did. He insured the status of Illinois as a free state before the Civil War. [From Arthur C. Boggess, *The Settlement of Illinois 1778-1830*; Robert P. Howard, *Illinois*; James Gray, *The Illinois*; Robert P. Sutton, *The Prairie State*; Robert P. Sutton, *The Heartland*; Illinois Periodicals Online, "Governor Edward Coles," <http://lib.niu.edu/ipo/1994/ihy940462.html> (Aug. 29, 2006); Illinois Periodicals Online, "Edward Coles, Patrician Emancipator," <http://www.lib.niu.edu/ipo/2005/iht1210502.html> (Aug. 29, 2006); Illinois, "The Slavery Question in Illinois," <http://www.state.il.us/HPA/lovejoy/illinois.htm> (Aug. 29, 2006); and Governors of Illinois, "Governor Edward Coles of Illinois," <http://history.rays-place.com/governors/il/coles-e.htm> (Aug. 28, 2006).]

Elijah Parish Lovejoy: Defender of Freedom

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Elijah P. Lovejoy was a staunch supporter of not only the abolitionist cause but also freedom of the press. He did not allow the strong words and actions of others to change his mind or stop him from printing his beliefs in his newspaper. These unpopular actions eventually led to his murder at the hands of an angry mob.

Elijah Parish Lovejoy, known as the "martyr abolitionist," was born on November 9, 1802, in Albion, Maine. He was born to a Presbyterian clergyman, and both of his parents were of old New England stock. As a college graduate he emigrated to St. Louis, Missouri, where he taught school and edited the Whig newspaper. He also wanted to become a preacher like his father, so he returned east to attend the seminary at Princeton in 1832. He got his license to preach in April 1833 from the Philadelphia Presbytery.

He received requests from friends in St. Louis to return and begin the publication of a religious newspaper in 1833. Elijah and his friends invested $1,200 for the purchase of supplies. Elijah was elected editor and was given full control of the business. Lovejoy expressed his gratitude and promised to edit the paper in the interest of the church only. He could not keep that promise and week after week his abolitionist views kept creeping into the column of the *St. Louis Observer*. The first issue of the *St. Louis Observer* was published on November 22, 1833. His editorials and the sermons he preached in church angered many people. In June 1834, Lovejoy wrote an editorial opposing slavery. On April 16, 1835, another article appeared in the *St. Louis Observer* on slavery. He discussed how Christians allying themselves with those who support slavery was a great

wrong. "As I have before stated many times, and as I here repeat, I am opposed to slavery; believing it to be a great moral, and of course, political evil, a sin and a curse to any community where it exists." In an editorial that he wrote on November 5, 1835, he criticized the Roman Catholics, and it caused him further disrespect.

As he matured, he became more critical and outspoken about slavery. "Our creed is that slavery is a sin—theretofore, hereafter, and forever—a sin. Consequently it follows that whoever has participated, or does now participate, in that sin, ought to repent without a moments delay." Threats of violence forced him to move to Alton, Illinois in 1836. Lovejoy believed he had a right to publish his anti-slavery views, saying that he would not yield to angry mobs opposed to his rights of freedom of speech and of the press. In late July 1836, Lovejoy ordered his press to be moved to Alton. Sometime that night, while on the wharf, it was destroyed and dumped into the river by a group of anti-abolitionists. They told Lovejoy to leave Alton. He refused, insisting that freedom of speech and of the press were guaranteed to him by the Constitution.

Lovejoy proposed an anti-slavery society on July 6, 1837. He wrote defiantly, "These mobs will cease as soon as some of the mobites are hung up by the neck, and not before. . . . Mercy no less than Justice calls for a summary execution of some of the wretches as an example to the rest." Lovejoy also angered people when he said that the Depression of 1837 might be God's way of punishing the people of Alton.

That November he had ordered a new press, and upon its arrival the townspeople became uneasy. Lovejoy and his friends stood guard over the press when violence suddenly broke out. Many shots were fired and in minutes many people were dead, including Lovejoy himself.

Elijah Parish Lovejoy was shot and killed defending his printing press against a mob that tried setting fire to the warehouse where it was stored. A bell rang from the church as a warning, hoping to enlist aid to the defenders. Before his death, the mob hurled paving stones, breaking every window in the building. Elijah and the other defenders threw earthenware down onto the attackers. The rioters brought ladders and burning torches to toss onto the roof. Elijah P. Lovejoy was shot five times while he was trying to push away one of the ladders. No one was ever convicted of his murder.

Lovejoy's conviction that slavery was wrong and a sin and his insistence on freedom of the press earned him a place of honor in the history of journalism. It was not until after the Civil War that slavery was abolished. But many people with no direct involvement with the slave controversy came to the defense of Lovejoy's rights of freedom of speech and of the press. On November 8, 1897, the citizens of Illinois dedicated the Lovejoy monument in Alton to honor Elijah Parish Lovejoy. The monument is 90 feet tall and has two stones at the entrance telling his story. [From Lois A. Carrier, *Illinois Crossroads of a Continent*; Merton L. Dillon, *Elijah P. Lovejoy Abolitionist Editor*; Dumas Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography American Council of Learned Societies*, vol. 6; Bill Nunes, *Southern Illinois An Illustrated History*; George W. Smith, *History of Illinois and Her People*, vol. 2; and William C. Winter, *The Civil War in St. Louis A Guided Tour*.]

The Underground Railroad: Paths and Routes in Illinois

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Imagine crossing the country in the middle of the night with no food or shelter. Although this feat sounds impossible, many African Americans accomplished it in the 1800s. These African Americans were runaway slaves that traveled along some of the most secret routes in history, the Underground Railroad. Because it was established by abolitionists, the Underground Railroad was very important for the slaves' survival. Most of these routes led to large cities in Illinois, such as Chicago. As a result, because of the many Underground Railroad paths, routes, and influential people in Illinois, Chicago was an important city for freedom-seeking slaves, which resulted from its strong abolitionist movement.

Illinois was most heavily impacted by the five Underground Railroad routes passing through it. Because slaves had to escape from the southern states and head north, all Underground Railroad lines began in southern Illinois. The people of southern Illinois saw the tortures endured by African Americans. This sparked sympathy toward the runaways, causing Southern Illinois to become more abolitionist friendly. This brought problems as well. The slaves' "masters" eventually began searching for the runaways, and began demanding that the people of Illinois had to cooperate. This caused tension, which eventually led into fights along the border. This also caused anti-free state societies to begin. Despite all of this, slaves continued to escape through Illinois and reach their destination in Chicago.

Chicago had many abolitionist supporters and sympathetic people living there. Although they did not have full rights, slaves could hold jobs and were paid without the risk of discrimination. Chicago was geographically located in an ideal place for slaves. It was far north and out of reach from slave hunters and their former masters, and it was near other free states. Chicago also bordered Lake Michigan, which led to Canada, another safe haven for slaves. The Underground Railroad not only benefited slaves; it benefited Chicago as well. When the Fugitive Slave Act was issued, all slaves in Chicago were unsafe because this new law allowed slave hunters to capture slaves in free states, regardless of citizenship. This caused all slaves in Chicago to flee to Canada causing the people of Chicago to help slaves escape. They also refused to permit slave catchers to enter the city. Chicago had become a strong abolitionist city and was truly devoted to the anti-slavery cause.

Although a majority of the people in Illinois supported the abolitionist cause, some very influential people had to help the residents of southern Illinois understand the horrors of slavery. One important person that helped influence Illinois was Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy. Lovejoy hated slavery because of his religion. After he started protesting to the slave owners, who violently dismissed him, he began publishing an abolitionist newspaper. In 1836, Lovejoy moved to Alton, Illinois, a city that had many pro-slavery supporters living in it. He then began printing his religious newspaper despite the angry mobs that accumulated at his door. This newspaper spoke openly about the evils of slavery and explained that this was not the way civilized societies functioned. This caused many people, especially in Chicago, to understand the horrors of slavery and to become anti-slavery supporters themselves. Therefore, the pro-slavery supporters became

enraged. On a fateful night in November 1837, a large mob gathered around a pottery warehouse, the rumored location of Lovejoy's new press. Unfortunately for Lovejoy, the mob came to the correct location. Then, the fight began. It started as a fistfight, but evolved into a gunfight. Lovejoy's friends desperately defended his new press. When an abolitionist attempted to calm the crowd, the mob responded in gunfire. The abolitionists then threw pottery onto the mob. These makeshift projectiles discouraged the mob from storming the warehouse. Then the mob began igniting the building. While Lovejoy tried to extinguish these fires, he was shot to death. The abolitionist then ran to protect the body Elijah P. Lovejoy, while the mob destroyed the press and flung it into the Mississippi River.

Although this was a pro-slavery victory, it also had benefits for the northern abolitionists. The largest benefit was Chicago's stand. After Lovejoy's death, Chicago, inspired by his bravery, took a stand and openly declared itself an abolitionist city. Chicago's support allowed even more routes to be created.

After the death of Lovejoy, new, bold abolitionists emerged. One of which was Fredrick Douglass. Douglass was a free slave that wrote about the horrors of slavery in his abolitionist newspaper *The North Star*. These newspapers circulated throughout the free states' cities. Chicago and other heavily populated cities in Illinois were exposed to very strong abolitionist views, thus resulting in a change of heart for many once pro-slavery supporters. Although he used the power of the press to spread the views of abolitionists, Douglass also spoke in various cities. Some of his speeches were given in Chicago, which caused mixed reactions throughout the city. Abolitionists were interested in what he said, while pro-slavery supporters hated them. Despite the protests of angry

pro-slavery supporters, Douglass still spoke and spread the word of freedom. Eventually, most pro-slavery supporters in Chicago became heavy anti-slavery supporters. Due to these speeches, Chicago became an even stronger abolitionist center.

Because of the many Underground Railroad paths, routes, and influential people in Illinois, Chicago was an important city for freedom-seeking slaves, which allowed it to demonstrate strong abolitionist support. Chicago was never to be the same again. [From Raymond Bial, *The Underground Railroad*; *The History of Chicago: The Underground Railroad,* <http://www.chicagohistory.ugrr.org.html>. (Sept. 5, 2006); Kallen A. Stuart, *Life on the Underground Railroad*; Student historian's interview with Glennette T. Turner, Sept. 10, 2006; and Glennette T. Turner, *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*.]

The Savior: Harriet Tubman

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In the mid 1800s many people risked their lives daily to help slaves living in the South. It was a bold thing to do, but these caring men and women were ready to take the risk so others could be free. In 1835, the Underground Railroad became an endeavor that provided an opportunity for slaves to find freedom. Besides offering slaves food and shelter, these courageous men and women put their own lives at risk, helping the mistreated and abused blacks discover freedom on their long journey to the North.

Born a slave in Maryland in 1820, Harriet Tubman was one of the most famous and remarkable conductors of the Underground Railroad. She was a conductor, traveling to and from the North nearly twenty times, freeing over 300 slaves in ten years. The Illinois Central Railroad was most commonly used as an escape route for runaway slaves all throughout the Civil War. Harriet Tubman made the most of the Illinois Central Railroad, by leading slaves along trails in eastern Illinois. Even though Harriet Tubman's plan was well thought out, she knew it would be extremely difficult for the slaves to escape. First, the slaves must escape the slaveholder, which would require the slaves to use their own resources. They were well aware if they wanted to escape, they would need to wait until nightfall. The conductors guided the runaways ten to twenty miles to the next "station," an abolitionist's home where they were offered food, shelter, and a warm bed. The slaves' most common routes on the Underground Railroad were along the Ohio and Mississippi River leading to the North. Although the terrain was rough and often dangerous, many amazing and audacious people offered to help the fugitive slaves.

These included Frederick Douglass, John Whitter, Josiah Henson, and, Tomas Garret. They gave slaves food and clothing along the way and accompanied them if needed. The expedition was very dangerous; therefore, many of the conductors carried weapons. Tubman too carried a rifle with her on her expeditions. The slaves sometimes became so frightened they considered turning back, but Tubman knew that they would never forgive themselves so she threatened them, "you'll go on or die!" These were harsh words, but it was a harsh journey.

Harriet Tubman was a remarkable woman who was selfless, caring, and devoted to everything she did. She knew the dangers she was facing during her journeys, and knew, if she were caught, what her fate would be. But, she never let those thoughts get in the way; she devoted over fifteen years of her life helping slaves escape from a life of abuse and mistreatment.

When Tubman was a young girl, she began working as a house servant for a local farmer. Several years later, at the age of eleven, Tubman was in a general store when the owner became furious with another slave and threw a two-pound weight striking Harriet in the head. She suffered continually from severe headaches and seizures, but still remained determined to pursue her mission in life, freeing the enslaved. Until 1849 Harriet worked as a slave under the control of her plantation owner until one night, with the help of a white woman, she escaped to Philadelphia. As a free woman, Tubman was able to find work, but later returned to Maryland to help free the rest of her family. However, when she returned, she was deeply disturbed to discover that her husband had married another woman. Nevertheless, she still forged ahead, remaining faithful to her mission. Many years later, in 1862 she became not only a spy for the North, but also an

anti-slavery orator. In 1865 she decided to rescue additional slaves from the southern plantations. Because of her knowledge of the trails, tunnels and secret routes leading all throughout the state of Illinois and several others, she made an exceptional spy for the North. Once Harriet had enough information on the enemy, she informed the northern government of their strengths and weaknesses, eventually helped the North during the Civil War.

In 1850 legislation formerly known as the Fugitive Slave Act became law. Also known as part of the Compromise of 1850, it stated that Texas was no longer a free state, and that owning slaves in California and slave trading in the District of Columbia was illegal. The compromise increased the use of the Underground Railroad since all escaping and freed slaves could be sought after and returned to the owner, including those who had been free up to five years. After the Fugitive Slave Act passed, many conductors took refuge in towns like Chicago. Freed African Americans were able to watch over the town, throughout the night, alerting slaves and conductors of any approaching enemies. This worried those involved in helping runaway slaves. If the conductors were caught, or turned in by another party, they could be fined, sent to jail, or even killed.

The Underground Railroad was a movement that tore at the souls of all those involved. These men and women were an inspiration with their courage and dedication and wisdom. There is hope for all of us to follow the pattern that they have set forth. [From Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan*; Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman The Road to Freedom*; Glennette Tilley Turner, *The Underground Railroad*; Elaine Landau, *Fleeing to Freedom On The Underground Railroad*; The Staff of National Geographic

Society, 1996-2006. "The Underground Railroad: Faces of Freedom", <http://www.national geographic.com/railroad/hfame.html> (Sept. 26, 2006); Staff of WGBH Educational Foundation, "Harriet Tubman," <http://www.pbs./wgbh/aia/part4/4p1535.html> (Sept. 26, 2006); Staff of National Park Foundation, "Boston African-American National Historic," "Harriet Tubman," <http://www.nps.gov/archive/boaf/harriettubman.htm> (Oct. 4, 2006); and The National Center for Public Policy Research, <http:/www.nationalcenter.org/FugitiveSlaveAct.html> (Oct. 21, 2006).]

Senator Everett Dirksen: Impact on the Civil Rights Act of 1964

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Thomas Jefferson once said, "All…will bear in mind this…principle, that…the will of the majority…must be reasonable;…the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression." This was said before people would consider slaves people, but can be applied to today's society. Although it took America and Illinois years to realize that skin color does not affect who a person is, it was realized. Legislators from different states stepped forward to voice their opinions, and legislators from the same places rose to oppose those opinions. Illinois itself was divided, but was mainly pro-civil rights. What it needed was a law to enforce these people's rights. While Senator Everett Dirksen devoted himself to helping to pass laws like the New Deal, he influenced Illinoisans the most by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Senator Dirksen made his biggest impact in Senate, but it is important to understand his origins. In 1893, when he was born in Pekin, Illinois, Pekin was conservative with few opposing views. Dirksen was a Republican his entire life. In his childhood, he loved words. Still, he decided to be a politician when he saw how Lincoln rose out of poverty and made a difference. As he graduated high school, Dirksen focused on this. He went to college and joined the Reserve Officer's Training Corps. In 1917, America joined World War I, and Dirksen's participation in the ROTC made him an obvious choice for a soldier. He went to war and became a second lieutenant within a year. When he returned, he launched his political career instead of returning to college.

Dirksen started by making patriotic speeches for the American Legion. This was the beginning of what would soon make him famous.

Throughout his political life, Dirksen approached situations energetically. This was shown from the beginning. He started his career in 1926 when he ran for city council. Dirksen won by a landslide. After doing his job as councilman, Dirksen ran against Congressman William Hull. Dirksen lost, but started campaigning at the end of that election year to be ready for the next opportunity. In 1932, having campaigned for several years, he won by a large margin. Being a representative of his district in Illinois suited Dirksen, and it is evident that this work was exactly what he believed the world needed.

Once he was elected to Congress, Dirksen served from 1933 to 1969. Dirksen had been preparing to be a part of the majority, but when he reached Congress, changed tactics to a minority party. He understood the need to persuade more on the level of a human being than as a party representative. This humanization made him a judicious legislator. He did, however, contradict himself on occasion. For instance, he often said that he was prepared to die for a cause, but also projected how compromise was the most important aspect of Congress. He said that no matter what, humans are born having different beliefs, and that society could only function when these beliefs are heard. Dirksen also thought that everyone was persuadable. Even today, these beliefs can be seen all over Illinois.

While in the Senate, Dirksen voted for anything he believed helped the citizens of Illinois. For example, while he did not support every aspect of the New Deal, he voted for most of its elements. This can be attributed to the fact that he had experienced the

poverty that everyone faced during the Great Depression. Also, Dirksen never accepted what he believed incorrect. This ability made it easy to see segregation as wrong. He did sometimes oppose civil rights because of the violent displays he saw for "the good of the people." In doing this, he proved to be supportive of progress as well as understanding.

Finally, Dirksen helped pass the most monumental bill in his career: the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It forbade discrimination in public, allowed the attorney general to bring suits to the Supreme Court, allowed blacks to vote, cut off funds to discriminatory places, and created the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) to defend anyone who suffered because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was introduced to Congress, Dirksen liked it, but had problems with the titles that outlawed segregation in public and established the EEOC. These doubts played out during the longest filibuster in Senate history, which began in March. Two-thirds of the Senate needed to vote for an end to invoke cloture, but it seemed like everyone except a few Republicans were obstinate. At this point, Dirksen realized that the only way to pass the bill would be to revise it. Thus, in May, he wrote about seventy alternate amendments. Dirksen brought interested senators and lawyers and senior officials of the Justice Department to his office to rewrite the act in a passable way. This system explains why the bill passed. On June 10, 1964, Dirksen successfully shut down the fifty-seven day filibuster, using cloture for the benefit of civil rights for the first time in history. Had it not been for Dirksen's eloquence, it might have been another twenty years before any civil rights bill was enacted. In this way, Dirksen proved his significance in Illinois history.

In conclusion, Senator Everett Dirksen spent his entire life making an impact on Illinois and America, but made the largest impression by helping pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Some find it amazing that there was debate on this issue. However, legislators not only had to get enough votes to pass the bill, but to end the longest filibuster in history. This country now knows that these rights are what make America free. "A community is only democratic when the…weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, social, and economic rights that the biggest …possess." [Everett McKinley Dirksen, *The Education of a Senator*; Byron C. Husley, *Everett Dirksen and his Presidents*; Byron Husley, *Dirksen: Master Legislator*; "Dirksen Center," <http://www.dirksencenter.org> (Sept.10, 2006); Neil MacNeil, *Dirksen*; and Edward L. Schapsmeier and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, *Dirksen of Illinois*.]

Myra Colby Bradwell: Women's Rights Activist

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A lot of people talk about 'the power of one' and there is no better example of the power of one than Myra Colby Bradwell. Myra helped women in numerous ways, but the most memorable battle was her fight for women's right to be lawyers. How did her fight make a difference in Illinois history?

Myra Colby was born in Manchester, Vermont, on February 12, 1831. In 1843 her family moved to Elgin, Illinois. When she was young, she was very independent and spirited. Since her parents were involved in the abolitionist cause, they valued education and encouraged her to fight for what she thought was right.

After she returned from school in Kenosha, Wisconsin, she was considered the most eligible young lady in Elgin. Her parents had hopes of her marrying into an affluent family. Their expectations were not met when Myra fell in love with James Bradwell, who had no social title. Myra and James seemed to be perfect for each other. Both were open-minded and independent. Much to her parents' dismay, Myra and James eloped to Chicago.

Soon after their marriage James studied for the Illinois bar exam and passed. He quickly earned an outstanding reputation as a lawyer. He was also elected a judge on the Cook County Probate court.

Myra enjoyed working along side James and developed a desire to become a lawyer. James was more than willing to help her on this journey. In her time period only

men were allowed to undertake such a task, but that did not hold Myra Colby Bradwell back.

Ever since Myra had started working with James, she noticed that new laws were being passed constantly and that it took a while for the news of new rulings to come west. Myra wanted to start a newspaper for lawyers that contained reports on law changes. During the 1860s women were not allowed to own property, including businesses. Everything women earned or purchased after their wedding belonged to their husbands. Myra wanted to own the business herself. Being Myra, she set out to do just that. She asked the state legislature for permission to own the business in her name. With lobbying efforts and business friends' influence, Myra was granted the right by the Illinois State Legislature to own the *Chicago Legal News* in her name. On October 3, 1868, the first copy of the *Chicago Legal News* was printed and distributed. It instantly became an important resource for lawyers.

Now that Myra owned her newspaper, she often used the *Legal News* to sway public opinion in the favor of causes she thought were just. Her management of the newspaper and fiery editorials won her the respect of lawyers and legislators across the country.

Myra had not given up on her dream to become a lawyer. On August 2, 1869, she took the Illinois state bar exam and passed with flying colors. If she was to become a lawyer, she needed to request a legal license from the Illinois Supreme Court. In 1870 the Illinois Supreme Court rejected her request on the soul reason of coverture. Coverture was a law that roughly stated that during marriage, a woman's actions were basically invalid.

Myra continued to fight for what she believed was right for the rest of her life. In 1892 Myra Bradwell became a member of the Illinois State Bar Association. She was diagnosed with cancer shortly after the 1893 Columbian Exposition. James, in a last gesture of affection for his beloved wife, wrote letters to the Illinois and U. S. Supreme Courts. In 1890 and 1892 Myra Bradwell received letters from both courts saying that they had granted her a license to practice law and made their decisions retroactive to 1869. This effectively made Myra Bradwell the first woman lawyer in the history of the United States.

In conclusion, Myra Colby Bradwell made a difference in history by setting an example for future generations. Because of her determination and perseverance, women learned that they could excel in traditional male occupations even though men considered them incapable of success. It may seem that it was James in the end who won Myra the right to practice law, but if Myra had not been as fiery and spirited, the courts would have never even considered giving her a license to practice law. The world would have been a very different place had it not been for Myra Colby Bradwell. [From M. Buckley, T. Kilen, J. Rosenberg, and R. Siedel, *Illinois Women*; Robert P. Howard, *Illinois*; S. Ware, *Forgotten Heroes*; and E. Wheaton, *Myra Bradwell*.]

Elijah Lovejoy: Determined Patriot

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Elijah Lovejoy was an advocate for civil rights, and he paid the highest penalty for standing up for what he believed was right. He was a beacon of free speech during the 1830s, and, for that, should be commended. His writings brought many people to question their political and moral views on free speech, freedom of the press, and slavery. Even though his time spent publishing his newspaper was short lived, he managed to create a significant role for himself in the annals of American history.

"The story of Lovejoy and the Abolitionists is the story of the enduring vigil for freedom of thought, speech, and the press," according to one Web site. Elijah Lovejoy was a man who had strong moral fiber, which initially led him into serving as a Presbyterian minister. He began to speak his mind on the situation about the United States during the 1830s, and began to print a paper which would change his life. While he was publishing in St. Louis, a pro-slavery mob raided his building and destroyed his printing press. To escape further disruption, he moved across the Mississippi River to Alton, Illinois. During the 1830s he proclaimed that slavery should be abolished. This is something which would not have gotten him in trouble in a northern state, but in Missouri, slavery was legal. Lovejoy soon became outspoken on many aspects of civil rights, which caused conflict with outspoken citizens of the opposite viewpoint. Lovejoy made many enemies when he wrote that, "men and women who oppose slavery and yet did nothing to end it [were sinners]". Those kinds of statements got Elijah into trouble.

Elijah Lovejoy made many enemies writing his anti-slavery articles in his

newspaper. His determination to express his opinion was astounding. He was harassed for his feelings and for his intentions to put intelligent thought into the public discussion. "He continued writing and publishing the *Alton Observer* even after three presses were destroyed and thrown into the Mississippi River," according to one source.

On the night of November 7, 1837, Lovejoy and a small group of supporters were guarding his fourth printing press when an angry mob approached the building. A clash ensued and in the conflict Lovejoy was shot in the chest, killing him instantly. Elijah Lovejoy is remembered for his determination to state his views on slavery and civil rights. Elijah Lovejoy's friend Edward Beecher described him well when he called Lovejoy, "the first martyr in America to the freedom of speech and press."

In many people's opinion, "Elijah Lovejoy became an instant martyr in his actions to defend human rights." Nothing stopped him from holding up his ideas of what "free speech" meant. He supported both free speech and the idea that all men are created equal by publishing his paper. Lovejoy should be seen in the same rank as many patriots of the American Revolution. [From "Elijah Parish Lovejoy," <www.altonweb.com> (Oct. 15, 2006); Stu Fliege, *Tails and Trails of Illinois*; Abraham Resnick, *They Too Influenced a Nation's History*; and James Satter, *Journalists Who Made History*.]

Was there Agreement on the Chicago Freedom Movement Summit Agreement?

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Throughout learning about the Chicago Freedom Movement, I have discovered many new things about the civil rights movement that helped Chicago develop equality among African-American and minority residents and the work accomplished by some of the important leaders of the movement. A major subject that resonates over and over throughout the movement is the Summit Agreement. What exactly did the Summit Agreement state? And did the leaders at the time think that was a step toward equality for blacks?

What was the Summit Agreement? The Chicago Freedom Movement started in late 1965 and finished in early 1967. There were many great groups and leaders involved such as the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO), Martin Luther King, Jr., and Al Raby. Dr. King believed that nonviolent direct action could bring about social change outside the South. The Chicago Freedom Movement was concerned with housing, education, and inequality. The Chicago Freedom Movement declared "to end slums in Chicago." It organized tenants' unions, Operation Breadbasket, and rallied black and white Chicagoans to support its goals.

In late July 1966, the marches of the Chicago Freedom Movement began in all white neighborhoods on the Southwest and Northwest sides to protest unequal housing and redlining. After this, whites began to be angry. This began high level negotiations between city leaders, movement activists, and representatives of the Chicago Real Estate

Board. The culminating event of the Chicago Freedom Movement was launched to fuse the issues of housing, equality, and fairness for all residents of the city. This was the 1966 Summit Negotiations and Agreement to end unfair housing practices in the city of Chicago.

The Summit Agreement was put into place to ensure that governmental groups, the Chicago Real Estate Board, and other groups would work together towards fair housing for all residents of the city. The agreement also guaranteed that the Chicago Freedom Movement coalition pledge its resources to help carry out the programs outlined in the Summit Agreement and concede to the ending of neighborhood demonstrations on the issue of opening housing so long as programs of the summit agreement were being carried out. Many blacks believed the Summit Agreement was a "sellout". They believed Dr. King and his campaign in Chicago had failed.

Despite the criticisms of the Summit Agreement, there were some good things that came about. Rev. Jesse Jackson stayed in Chicago and lead Operation Breadbasket which later became Operation Push. It also gave birth to the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities. This was a product of the Summit Agreement which attacked housing discrimination.

The Chicago Freedom Movement highlighted the tremendous problems that existed in Chicago. It also shaped the way Chicagoans live today. Even though many activists did not agree on the Summit Agreement they did realize it was a step toward equality. Despite the efforts of the Chicago Freedom Movement, residential segregation remains formidable (or the same) in Chicago which now remains the third most segregated city in America. [From "Launch to Improve Housing for Negroes," *The*

Chicago Defender, June 4, 1966; "Program of the Chicago Freedom Movement," July 1966; "The Summit Agreement: Report of the Subcommittee to the Conference on Fair Housing Convened by the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race," August 26, 1966.]

Segregation in Carmi, Illinois

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Not many people know Carmi, Illinois, was once a place populated by many blacks, several of whom arrived as slaves. Today, only a handful of African Americans reside in the town of Carmi. A part of White County, Illinois, history has long been forgotten as if it never existed. What were the lives of African Americans like during the early to mid-1900s in a white community, and where have they gone?

African Americans living in White County, Illinois, during the 1920s and the 1930s endured a life of segregation. Most blacks lived in East Carmi across the Little Wabash River and on Clay Hill; while others lived in mixed neighborhoods in southwest Carmi and a few on the north side. At that time, there were several churches and one school for the blacks. Both grade school and high school children attended East Side School, which later became known as Lincoln School. The one-room school was built in 1874 and another room was added in 1904 for the high school students. Since the school was located near the Little Wabash, high water would rise every year causing the blacks to miss school. The school had two teachers; one taught first through sixth grade, while the other taught seventh through twelfth grade. Students were given a few books from other schools but never had the privilege of having new ones. East Side students did not have a basketball team until 1934 or 1935. They practiced outside in the yard and played scheduled games at the high school gym; although, they were not allowed to play against white teams. In 1938-1939, East Side beat Evansville's Lincoln basketball team which was considered to be very good. However, this was East Side's last year for basketball

due to the declining number of students. In 1950 East Side School closed; therefore, black children were admitted into the regular school system. Many of the blacks had already moved from Carmi to bigger cities in hopes of finding better jobs and being accepted as American citizens. More blacks moved to keep their children from attending a white school while others passed away.

Margaret Dungy, an African American resident of Carmi, has lived through the segregation in White County. Her husband, Charles, graduated from East Side. He, like many others, found it embittering to walk past the new Washington School on his way to the black school knowing he would never enter Washington. Charles Jr., the Dungy's son, was the first and only black to attend first grade at Washington School in 1950. Margaret and others were a bit apprehensive when they had heard that a white lady did not want any blacks sitting next to her child. However, to Mrs. Dungy's surprise, the white children took Charles Jr. by his hand and led him off to play. He and others did well in a white school.

Several successful people attended East Side. One of those successful blacks was George Jefferson who graduated from East Side in 1924. As a graduate of the University of Illinois, George became a principal of a three-room school in Shawneetown, served in the U.S. Army during War World II, and served on the staff of Division of Vocational and Technical Ed. He wrote a book called *The Great Society and I*. George Cross was another successful person. He taught at East Side in 1947-48. After the school closed, he coached and taught at Venice for seven years. He later coached at Hadley Tech in St. Louis and became its principal and counselor. He was inducted into the St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame on April 27, 1977, for his outstanding coaching career and his contributions

to the athletic program in the St. Louis area. George Jefferson and George Cross are just two of the many who graduated from East Side and led a successful life.

Blacks' opinions on life in Carmi vary all the way from life was not "too bad" to others who were deeply bitter. A black man who once lived in Carmi but left out of fear and anger, vowed never to return said, "They kept telling me I was a second-class citizen, and there was no hope for me. For a long time when I came back here I wanted to throw up when I hit the city limits." However, his bitterness gave way to understanding and possibly pity for the whites. Most whites were raised to treat blacks the way they did. Blacks were not allowed into the hospitals. Indoor plumbing for the blacks was not common. They had to take baths outside in little tubs. Another black man recalled that a white boy once called his little sister "nigger". He then knocked the white boy into the creek and he did not dare walk down Main Street for a month. "There was a saying that states: Light and bright, you're all right; Brown, you can stick around; Black, you gotta get back."

Others claimed life was not "too bad" for blacks. There were not many jobs for African American men. However, some of the men did yard work, farmed, or worked for the railroad in Evansville. Some shined shoes at downtown barber shops while others did not work at all. Women supported the families by working for little pay by holding domestic positions with white families. Some of the establishments downtown would not serve the blacks, although they could spend their money and then leave. However, as time passed blacks were allowed into the white churches and other establishments. Whites and blacks visited one another's homes.

In conclusion, not many knew Carmi, Illinois, was once a place populated by African Americans. Many residents of White County, Illinois, have forgotten or have never known about the black population and the segregation that took place in Carmi, Illinois. It will always be in the minds of those who are still living and in the minds of their descendants. Mrs. Dungy believes you take what is handed to you in life, make the best of it, and let God lead you. [From Barry Cleveland, "Bitterness ran deep for black man from Carmi," *White County Press*, May 30, 1980; Barry Cleveland, "There was militancy—but it was inside," *White County Press*, June 5, 1980; Barry Cleveland, "We're not bitter;' blacks look back," *White County Press*, May 23, 1980; Ernest Fechtig, School Bulletin Com. Unit District #5, vol. 7 (Carmi, IL, May 16, 1977) Number 37; and Student historian's interview with Margaret Dungy, Sept. 8, 2006.]

Oscar Stanton De Priest: Fighting 'Jim Crow' Inside the United States Congress

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The path to racial equality in the United States has been marred with struggles, controversies and setbacks. Consider, for example, the Jim Crow Laws. These sets of state and local laws, practiced predominantly in the southern states, required African-Americans to be segregated in all public facilities. Seating in buses and trains was segregated, as were public schools, lunch counters and seating in cafeterias. The Jim Crow era that spanned from 1876 through 1964 was challenged in 1954 through the landmark court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in which the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional. Yet, this dark era in American history ended only 10 years later, when President Lyndon Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was unthinkable that three decades before the passage of this law, the influence of the Jim Crow Laws was being felt in the halls of the United States Congress. In 1934, Illinois Congressman, Oscar Stanton De Priest, the first African-American Congressman from a northern state, challenged the Jim Crow discrimination that he experienced inside the halls of Congress.

Oscar Stanton De Priest's life is a profile in determination, hard work, courage, and conviction. De Priest was born to freed slave parents in 1871 in Alabama. When De Priest was seven, his family moved to Kansas. At the age of 17, De Priest ran away from home with two white companions to Chicago where he worked as an apprentice to a home decorator. Through his hard work and resolve, De Priest established a home decorating business when the African-American population was soaring in Chicago.

After realizing that the growing African-American population of Chicago greatly needed representation and voice, De Priest decided to get involved in politics, and subsequently joined Lincoln's Republican Party. De Priest became immersed in local politics and was elected as the Cook County Commissioner in 1904. Later, in 1914, he became Chicago's first African-American alderman. As alderman, De Priest was a spokesperson for the unrepresented blacks in his community.

In 1928, De Priest was thrust into the national political scene when Chicago's incumbent Congressman, John Madden, died during his campaign. De Priest replaced Madden on the ballot and won the election by receiving most of the votes in black precincts. During his victory speech, De Priest promised that he would represent all of the Chicagoans, and also that he would try to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments of the Constitution for every citizen. Newspapers nationwide exulted in De Priest's victory, and the Baltimore *Afro-American* specifically stated that, "We now have a man in Congress."

Even before De Priest was sworn in as a Congressman, he felt the pain of discrimination in the halls of Congress. His presence was not a welcome one for many southern Congressmen who refused to be in the same atrium as him. For instance, Jeff Busby, a six-year Congressman from Mississippi wanted the largest office in Congress which was designated for De Priest. De Priest was forced to relinquish the spacious office for a new but smaller one. The new office was next to the office of George Pritchard, a new Congressman from North Carolina. Hearing of his neighbor's background, Pritchard told his secretary to, "vacate immediately. Lock door and deliver key to superintendent of house office building. Remove my name from doors." These

remarks clearly were not a welcome sign for the new African-American Congressman. Heedless of the unwelcome comments from his fellow Congressmen, De Priest set out to start his work as an Illinois representative. One of De Priest's main contributions was to secure pensions for ex-slaves. De Priest also fought for appropriations to Howard University and the Tuskegee Institute. As a highly acclaimed orator, De Priest never missed a chance to speak against the Jim Crow Laws, and this was most evident in his third term in Congress representing the First District of Illinois.

In January 1934, De Priest's confidential secretary and his son were refused service at the Congressional restaurant because of the color of their skin. De Priest learned that the refusal was an arbitrary decision made by Lindsay C. Warren, the North Carolina representative, and De Priest was quite angered by it. De Priest raised this issue in Congress at his next chance and proposed a House Resolution to investigate Warren's actions. To initiate an investigation, De Priest began a petition drive and made convincing speeches in the chamber. In one speech he stated, "If we allow segregation and the denial of constitutional rights under the dome of the capitol, where in God's name will we get them?" Upon listening to the speech, a Texas Congressman reminded De Priest that he had never been refused service in the House Cafeteria and thus should not make an issue of the incident. De Priest succinctly replied, "I am not asking privileges for Oscar De Priest…but I am asking for those who have no voice in this Congress." De Priest's persistence for having the inquiry came to fruition when Congress established a five-man committee to investigate the House Cafeteria incident. The committee was comprised of 3 Democrats and was headed by the then Speaker of the House, Henry Rainey of Illinois. De Priest picked two Republicans to complete the

committee. The committees wrote reports stating their conclusions in May 1934. The majority sided with Warren and said that the cafeteria practice could continue, with only white guests allowed. The minority concluded that if Warren's ruling was not repealed, "It will set an example where people will say Congress approves of denying 10 percent of our population equal rights and opportunity; why should not the rest of the American people do likewise?"

Ultimately, De Priest lost his Congressional seat in 1934 and was unable to affect the changes in racial attitudes that the black community so desperately wanted. Regardless, De Priest's efforts and dedication to civil rights and his actions against inhumane Jim Crow laws will be remembered in history, as significant contributions towards racial equality. [S. Davis Day, "Herbert Hoover and Racial Politics: The De Priest Incident," *Journal Of Negro History* (Winter 1980); Kenneth Eugene Mann, "Oscar Stanton De Priest: Persuasive Agent for the Black Masses," *Negro History Bulletin* (October 1972); Elliot M. Rudwick, "Oscar De Priest and the Jim Crow Restaurant in the U.S. House of Representatives," *Journal of Negro Education* (Winter 1966); and Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement*.]

Housing and the Chicago Freedom Movement

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Racism, slums, and the ghettoes had been the reality for blacks in Chicago. While the city permitted its earlier ethnic groups to enter the mainstream of American life, blacks were locked into the lower classes of social and economic systems within the city. During the 1960s, most blacks in Chicago were confined to what the city considered to be the ghetto and had to endure second class treatment regardless of their social or economic status. Therefore, the struggle to obtain better housing was an obstacle that black Chicagoans had to endure. But the worst off were the poor blacks who made up forty percent of the city's black population. Most of these people were forced to deal with rat infested apartments, no heat, and lead poisoning that caused the deaths of many children. Being black and poor in Chicago also led to poor or substandard education and, as a result, froze many blacks in the city out of a better life by both race and poverty and gave them a dim view of achieving better.

The living conditions for blacks in Chicago from the early years of migration from southern states in the 1910s up until the 1960s were inhumane. Betty Washington, a black Chicagoan during the movement in the 1960s, talked about her apartment, “The building was originally a six flat, but twelve families are now living there. This is outrageous. How can twelve families live in a six flat and be comfortable? It’s impossible.” As a result of overcrowded apartments, landlords could collect more in rent and showed a lack of respect for the African-American residents who inhabited these buildings and apartments. When the tenants informed their landlords about this and other

problems, often nothing was done to correct these issues.

To bring national exposure to the housing problems that plagued Chicago's African-American community in 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Al Raby, a civil rights leader in Chicago, developed a plan as part of the Chicago Freedom Movement to improve housing conditions. The forming of rent strikes and tenant unions gave African-American residents living in the ghettoes of Chicago a voice to express their discontent to slum landlords, realtors, and the political machine that upheld these unfair housing practices. If buildings were not repaired by landlords and realtors, the residents then would not pay rent. The monies were put in a building fund that tenants used to repair buildings on their own. This action of tenant unions and rent strikes proved to be most effective as Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family took up residence on Chicago's West Side at 1550 South Hamlin Avenue to experience first hand the slum conditions African-Americans faced in Chicago.

On July 10, 1966, Al Raby and Martin Luther King, Jr. placed housing demands on the door of Chicago's city hall to combat the housing issues. The demands proposed: 1. “The mayor should immediately launch a new program to enforce the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance effectively and vigorously everywhere in the city; 2. the Chicago Real Estate Board should give support; 3. the Chicago Housing Authority should adopt a policy of no more high risk public housing projects in the Negro ghetto; 4. the Cook County Department of Public Aid should end the containment policy of seeking housing for and placing Negro families solely in ghetto communities; and 5. the Urban Renewal program should adopt a policy of using its relocation services to break down segregation barriers and to promote an open city.” These demands were guaranteed to ensure equality

in housing.

Lead poisoning was also a major issue that existed within Chicago housing. For example, at 842 West 61st Street, a child chewed on the window sill of his home, and approximately two to three months later, his eyes began to cross, his skin broke out, and his hearing appeared to be affected. Five days after the mother found out he had lead poisoning, he died. “Many people went through this same problem because the poison flourished throughout most houses on this block and in the community." Many African-American residents also did not have access to medical treatment. A local newspaper wrote, "By the time they actually got to the hospital they would have to wait because there were forty or more children under treatment”.

Al Raby and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood the actions of the freedom movement had to force the Chicago metropolitan area to lead the rest of the nation in the solution of the problem on fair housing. There was need for change and the Chicago Freedom Movement was created to make the necessary changes.

In conclusion, before the Chicago Freedom Movement was created, housing was a huge problem. People died from lead poisoning because of the materials used to build the homes. People lived in overcrowded homes. People shared bathrooms with other families. But then actions were enforced that helped black Chicagoans. This movement created equality in pay and affordable housing which allowed better living conditions for families. Al Raby's demands through the Chicago Freedom Movement were a great success for the slums in Chicago. According to Dr. King, a slum was “any area of real estate where everything is taken out and nothing comparable to what is taken out is put back that would bring the community up.” Through the Chicago Freedom Movement,

the “slums” was demolished and bound to never return again. [From "Poisoned Tot's Mom Issues Plea," *Chicago Daily Defender*, July 29, 1963; Program of the Chicago Freedom Movement, July 1966; and "Westside Group Declares War on Lead Poisoning," *Chicago Daily Defender*, Oct. 27, 1965.]

Education and the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago

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Equality in Chicago Public Schools was rare in the 1960s. Education is something that everyone needs. The education that African Americans received in Chicago Public Schools was terrible. As a result, change had to occur; marches and boycotts had to happen to improve this crisis in the Chicago Public Schools.

Chicago Public Schools were very segregated. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court made a decision that separate education is unequal, and therefore illegal. Twelve years later, the Chicago Public School system was still segregated. This affected ninety percent of Chicago Public School children. Either the school was mostly black or mostly white; it was rare that one found both. For example, in 1961, Ogden School had an enrollment of sixty-five percent white and twelve percent black. Byrd School had ninety-eight percent black and two percent white. Consequently, segregation in schools led to inadequate education for blacks.

Conditions did not stop here. Chicago school districts were remapped to ensure that schools stayed segregated. In 1961, Wells High School was redistricted to exclude students from the Near North Side from enrollment there. Those in attendance were allowed to graduate. No further enrollment from District 7 was allowed, which meant the blacks were not allowed. African Americans had to go to school at Waller High, leaving Wells to just the whites. This shows that African Americans were forced into high schools, which led to overcrowding. By 1964, Waller High School was overcrowded.

Students were given the choice to attend Cooley High in the heart of the ghetto, or not to attend at all.

This was only one flaw in the Chicago Public School system that led to poor education for blacks. Many good teachers also left and unqualified teachers replaced them. The question is what was done about these things? A lot of letters of complaint were sent to the Superintendent of the Chicago Public schools, Dr. Benjamin C. Willis. These letters stated the problems that the schools had. Many parents and community members sent these letters to inform Dr. Willis about the needs of the schools. His response was that everything that the schools were supposed to have, they had been given. Common sense told a right thinking person that this could not be true if these many complaints were being sent and the whites were getting a better education.

The parents and community threatened a boycott against the school board. When the boycott occurred at Jenner School in 1964, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, radio stations, local community leaders, as well as Martin Luther King, Jr. were present. This showed that many supported this very important cause. How did the students get their education if the schools were being boycotted? This is where freedom schools came in. These were school sessions held in churches and other places to provide instruction to black school children while protests and boycotts occurred.

All of this protesting did not come without grief, especially for teachers. Teachers' jobs were at stake and were actually threatened if the protests did not stop. People were unmovable and unshakable in their fight for educational equality. Given the fact that schools are equal and not segregated anymore, the fight was not in vain. This was only one aspect of the hard work that went in to fighting for equality in schools. The

fight goes on because as good as schools are now, they could be a lot better. [From Chicago Urban League, National Urban League Leadership Development Project, Project Director: Miss Willene DeMond, "Anatomy of a Boycott, Edward Jenner School," 1964; Thomas Lee Philpott, *Black Metropolis*; *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, "Redlining;" and Bill Van Alstine, "CCCO To Demand Delay In School Budget Passage," *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition) Dec. 6, 1966.]